

Hunnewell, Hardy Upham (HHU) Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Guiding Principals

The purpose of this statement is to communicate to the School Committee the HHU PAC's shared tenets and beliefs, even as we may not be entirely aligned in our assessment of the direction the town should take in addressing the town's school facilities' needs. They also reflect the charge the PAC set out at the start:

"Provide a recommendation to the School Committee for a comprehensive town-wide solution to facility needs at Hardy, Hunnewell and Upham based on School Committee guidelines and previous School Facilities Committee work."

The PAC recommends that the School Committee take these guiding principles into account when making their final recommendation(s), and the final proposal should:

- Allow for school size and structure, and "value" that provide an optimal environment for learning
- Take a long term perspective, acknowledging short-term pain for any solution
- Work to balance the needs of the entire elementary school population
- Be sensitive to the emotional impact if closing a school
- Follow a transparent and open process

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- Any solution must include a clear plan for swing space that minimizes disruptions to students, faculty, and staff. The plan should include identification of swing space, student placement plans and transportation plans.
- A new enrollment study should be performed to provide the most accurate, up-to-date projections, ideally using multiple or different methodologies.
- The solution should provide for more flexibility relative to the ebbs and flows of enrollment year to year and ensure capacity for future needs in order to limit redistricting in the future.
- Preserve the town-wide concept of neighborhood schools.
- In order to ensure community buy-in, the process should be transparent to all town citizens, and especially to those most affected (whether through closure, rebuilding, or redistricting). Methods could include forums for community input, more broad communication of open meetings and other grass roots efforts.
- If the final recommendation is to close a school, recognize the emotional impact of the decision. In addition, emphasize the importance of maintaining the building and/or fields as a community asset and make efforts to get a commitment from the town that they will remain as such.
- Provide a recommendation that the School Committee is most confident will be supported town-wide, and balances the educational needs of Wellesley's students with being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers in Wellesley.
- Revisit the traffic impact to the neighborhoods surrounding all affected schools, including the impact of closing the school, of opening a larger school at an existing location, and additional ways to alleviate traffic issues around the affected schools.